



Shop Wastewater

Potential Environmental Impacts

Vehicle maintenance wastewater is floor washdown and incidental drippage from vehicles as a result of routine servicing operations, washing vehicle exteriors or steam cleaning engines, or vehicle dismantling or crushing. It may contain chemicals such as oils, degreasers, gasoline, diesel fuel, detergents, heavy metals and antifreeze. In some instances it may contain solvents. If discharged through a dry well or septic system to the ground, these chemicals may render drinking water supplies unfit for human consumption. If discharged directly or indirectly to surface water these chemicals can be toxic to fish and other aquatic life.



Shop wastewater directed outside is an illegal discharge.

Legal Requirements

- ◆ If your facility has floor drains, they must connect to either 1) a sewer line that connects to a sewage treatment plant or, 2) a holding tank. If you do not know where your floor drains lead, the building plans that you have or that are on file at the town hall may show locations of drain discharges. Floor drains must not discharge to a septic system, a drywell, or a storm sewer.
- ◆ A permit is required if your facility has floor drains [CGS Section 22a-430]. If you meet the conditions listed below, you may qualify for the *General Permit for the Discharge of Vehicle Maintenance Wastewater*:
 - The facility generates no more than 15,000 gallons per day of vehicle maintenance wastewater.
 - All vehicle wastewater must be treated using an oil and grit separator that has a least a 1,000-gallon capacity and meets specifications outlined in the General Permit.
 - Vehicle wastewater must discharge from the separator either through a sewer line to a sewage treatment plant or to a holding tank that meets the specifications of the General Permit. If the holding tank is installed, you must have a permitted transporter haul the wastewater to a sewage treatment plant that is properly permitted to accept vehicle maintenance wastewater. Contact CT-DEP's Waste Bureau at (860) 424-4193 for a list of permitted transporters.
 - Vehicles must be washed, steam-cleaned and/or serviced within a roofed structure constructed to keep vehicle wastewater separate from stormwater.

- The oil and grit separator must be inspected at least twice per year. A log of these inspections must be kept at the facility. (See the Vehicle Maintenance Wastewater General Permit for the required log form.) The separator must be cleaned out as often as necessary to assure effective operation. The quantity of oil, grease and grit shall not exceed 20% of the distance between the separator base and static liquid level.
- Oil, water and grit removed from the oil and grit separator must be sent to a facility that is permitted to accept such wastes. In addition, the waste must be picked up and hauled to this facility by a permitted transporter. See the Used Oil Fact Sheet for additional requirements on the management of this waste.
- If vehicle wastewater is collected in a holding tank, the wastewater must be picked up by a permitted transporter and brought to a facility that is permitted to accept it. If the facility that you send your wastewater to is a used oil recycler, you must also manage your wastewater under the used oil requirements. (See the Used Oil Fact Sheet for more information on these requirements.)
- ◆ Small volume autobody repair facilities and small volume vehicle detailing facilities that discharge less than 500 gallons per day of vehicle wastewater may discharge their vehicle wastewater directly through a sewer line to a sewage treatment plant without treatment. See the Guidance Document for the General Permit to determine if your facility meets the other requirements for a small volume operation.
- ◆ Chemical liquids, such as oil or petroleum, antifreeze, paints, degreasers (both solvent and aqueous based), and rust proofing compounds, should be stored and disposed of in accordance to all state and federal requirements. Proper precautions should be taken so that these liquids do not end up discharging into floor drains or outside of the facility. (See Appendix A for waste management and disposal requirements.)

For a copy of the general permit, registration form or guidance document explaining the requirements, visit the “Permits, Licenses and Registrations” section of the DEP website at www.dep.state.ct.us/pao/download.htm#VehicleGP or call the CT-DEP’s Bureau of Water Management at (860) 424-3018.

Best Management Practices

- ★ Adopt a dry shop goal. Keep your shop floor dry and clean.
 1. Clean snow and ice off of the top of vehicles before bringing them inside.
 2. Prevent spills from ever reaching the floor by using appropriate equipment; such as funnel drum covers and overhead fluid delivery systems.
 3. Sweep or vacuum floors often.
 4. Make sure mechanics carry rags so that small spills can be wiped dry when they occur.
 5. Never hose down your work area.
- ★ Consider sealing your shop floor with epoxy or other suitable sealant so spills won't be absorbed and clean-ups will be quicker. It can reduce the liability for a clean-up of a contaminated shop floor and soil below.

- ★ If it becomes necessary to wash the floor, use only the quantity of water needed to produce the appropriate level of cleanliness. Direct all wastewater to a properly permitted floor drain (see Legal Requirements section above). Flushing floor wastes outside constitutes an illegal discharge.
- ★ Always use self-closing faucets and nozzles to ensure no source is left running or unattended. Post this notice by all sinks and drains – “Do not pour any vehicle fluids, paints, solvents, or other wastes down sinks or drains”.
- ★ If your vehicle maintenance wastewater is collected in a holding tank and hauled to a permitted facility, you can reduce your costs by segregating the regulated vehicle maintenance wastewater from “household” type wastewater. Wastewater from bathrooms and cafeterias can be discharged to a septic system.
- ★ Only use absorbents like speedi-dry or "kitty litter" when the spill cannot be cleaned with shop rags, dedicated mops, or squeegees. Use absorbent pads and mats to prevent large spills from spreading and entering floor drains. See the Rags and Absorbents Fact Sheet on how to properly manage spent absorbents.
- ★ Clean up spills immediately so that the spilled material does not get tracked outside the building.
- ★ A permanently sealed floor drain should first have a plumber’s plug inserted inside the drain. Concrete should then be poured on top of the plumber’s plug.

Sealed floor drain -- spill should be cleaned up immediately so that material doesn't get tracked outside the building.



Pollution Prevention Checklist

✓ Do you have a goal of keeping your shop floor 100% dry? YES NO N/A



Did You Know?

More than 50% of the nation's drinking water comes from ground water.

2004 Pit Stops Fact Sheets

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, 79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106-5127
Office of Pollution Prevention (860) 424-3297 www.dep.state.ct.us/wst/p2/vehicle/abindex.htm
Fact Sheet: DEP-P2-PITSTOPS-FS-012

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